

Michael F. Easley
Governor



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Contact: Ernie Seneca
Phone: 919/733-5612

NORTH CAROLINA INVESTS \$64.5 MILLION IN BIOTECHNOLOGY

RALEIGH – North Carolina has taken a momentous step towards the industry of the future, launching a \$64.5 million initiative to train workers for biotechnology jobs. The Golden LEAF Foundation, a non-profit organization, has awarded its largest grant ever to N.C. State University, N.C. Central University and the state's community college system.

“This action by the Golden LEAF puts us on top of the biotechnology wave,” Gov. Mike Easley said. “It will place North Carolina in a prime position to corner the market on high-paying jobs.

“Their plan is designed to channel the training centers’ expertise to those rural counties in transition, which fits with the biotechnology demand for a supply of agricultural products,” Easley said. “This has the potential to translate into a real benefit, not only for tobacco dependent communities, but also for the entire state. I look forward to working with Golden LEAF, the universities and the community colleges as biotechnology moves from research to the manufacturing stage.”

Approved Thursday, the funds will be used to train and retrain workers of all levels to fill jobs making drugs, vaccines and agricultural products. The foundation will supply \$60 million for the new initiative; biotechnology companies have agreed to supply the other \$4.5 million.

North Carolina State University in Raleigh will get \$36 million to build a training center. Another \$19.1 million will go to N.C. Central University in Durham for undergraduate and graduate degree programs in biotechnology. Community colleges will receive \$9.4 million for workforce training.

Funding will finance a comprehensive training program to be administered by the community colleges strategically located across the state. A manufacturing plant that will include state-of-the art equipment to train community college and university students will be located at N.C. State University’s Centennial Campus.

North Carolina’s biotech industry employs about 18,500 state residents in such areas as biomanufacturing and drug development. The state has more than 180 biotechnology companies with 75 contract research organizations.

The Golden LEAF (Long-term Economic Advancement Foundation) was created in 1999 as a non-profit corporation by court order in a consent decree resolving litigation that the N.C. Department of Justice initiated. It receives one half of the funds coming to North Carolina resulting from the Master Settlement Agreement with tobacco companies and makes grants to non-profit and government agencies.

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